

# Del Rio: Fishing for trash, fishing for lost people

April 4, 2017

At spring break, Texas Tech University's Baptist Student Ministry sent a team to Del Rio, where we partnered with a local church in community outreach. The church also had volunteers for the week from a few other youth groups in Texas to participate in a mission to reach the Del Rio community through service, focusing specifically on the poor and the sick who could not maintain their homes.

We all spent four days serving the community. We Tech students were paired with the youth as leaders and given the opportunity to invest in them and share the truth of the gospel with them. Our BSM leaders reminded us not to assume any of the kids already had heard the gospel; rather, they encouraged us to jump at every opportunity to share the message of Jesus.



A student team performs yard work for a Del Rio resident. Some of the Tech students and youth were given the job of clearing out a creek that runs through Del Rio. One student from our BSM told about standing in the creek all day with some of the youth, clearing things out for hours, investing and building relationships.

During their service, one of the youth asked her about the gospel and what a relationship with Jesus is. Soaking wet in a creek in South Texas, fishing for trash, couches and shopping carts, she was able to the gospel with a student she otherwise wouldn't have met, all because she laid her "yes" on the table before God. It was just like the disciples when Jesus said to them, "I will make you fishers of men."

Another encouraging event happened our last night with the youth groups. A girl walked up with her mother to another Tech student and asked to speak with her. The girl had told her mother, after seeing the Tech student worshipping in the church service: "That girl is worshipping God, Mom. Like, really worshipping God." The mom encouraged her daughter, saying that is possible for her, too, and that meeting with God and worshipping him with all you have is possible because of Christ. The mother thanked the Tech student for not being afraid or ashamed of her faith, and for showing her daughter that all can enter the throne room of God. No experience needed, no certain status required, no age limit, no limits of any kind. The throne room of God is open to all who will accept his invitation to enter. Little did the mom or girl know, that Tech student was struggling with believing God's face would shine upon her. God is using her life despite her doubts. God is faithful, even when we lack faith.

Our week was full of hard labor, both physically and spiritually. Our BSM group experienced unity and growth as a community in our yard work and community outreach in Del Rio. We also experienced spiritual warfare and fought hard in prayer and worship. And in it all, I am thankful I was there.

In Del Rio, I found Christ in the backyard of a family struggling through dialysis and cancer. I found Christ in the home of an 88-year-old woman who needed her Christmas decorations put away. I found Christ in a hammock in the backyard of a very generous woman who opened her home to us. I found Christ in the lives of my fellow students as we played card games together. I found Christ in a cooking class for kids in the park.

Throughout the week, God revealed to me that Christ is not limited by man's idea of "the mission field" and that I had only expected him to move in the places, rather than in the people. Christ truly is all and is in all. Christ doesn't need an invitation into a room or a city or a country to move there. But when Christ is welcomed with praise and prayer among believers, we will see him and feel his presence in ways we wouldn't have if we hadn't said: "Be in this place. Be all around us."

*Kayla Bolin is a student at Texas Tech University, where she is involved in Baptist Student Ministry.*